

CHAPTER – I

Rural development is the backbone of national development in India since about 65% of the people live in rural India. Agriculture is indeed the most vital sector of national development in a developing country like India. The significance of rural socio-economic development was understood by the policy makers and administrators in India. Rural sector needs to be modernized and developed on the basis of appropriate intervention of the state and other stakeholders of rural development. The goal of development is the creation of a new society on the basis of human values and principles of social justice. Series of rural socio-economic development projects were implemented in India with a view to enhance the social and economic status of farmers, artisans and others in the countryside. The self government at global level, evolution of the Panchayats in India, local government in Kannur, need for rural development, constitutional provisions for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development and significance of the study are enumerated in this chapter.

The local government is an administrative body for a small geographical area, such as a city, town, village, etc in a country. A local government will typically have control only over their specific geographical region and cannot pass or enforce laws that will affect a wider geographical area. Local governments constitute the elected representatives, levy taxes and undertake many other social-economic development works as per the State or Central Governments related Acts. The local governments at the global level are primarily discussed in this work.

The System of Panchayat rule is especially found in Asian countries. ‘Panchayat’ virtually suggests that assembly (ayat) of 5 (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local people. Historically, these assemblies settled disputes between people and villages. Fashionable Indian government has sub organized the functions of local bodies to the native level by empowering elective Gram Panchayat. Gram Panchayats are not to be confused with the unelected khap Panchayats (or caste Panchayats) found in some parts of Asian countries. Panchayat rule may be a system of governance during which Gram Panchayats are the fundamental units of administration.

These local governments are organized at three levels like village, block and district in Asian countries.

In India, the local government authorities are the third level of government excluding the State and Central governments. There are two varieties of authorities in operation: Panchayats in rural areas and Municipalities in urban areas. The Panchayats area unit is a connected system of native bodies with village Panchayats (average population concerning 5,000), Panchayat samitis at the intermediate level (average population concerning 100,000), and district Panchayats (average population concerning 1,000,000). The authorized bodies are units of the democratic establishments at the fundamental level, states George Mathew (2000).

The basic concept of Panchayat Raj is that the villagers should think, decide and act for their own socio-economic interests. The Panchayat Raj Act is related to village self governance, where the people in the form of an organization will think, decide and act for their collective interests, where the Panchayats end their activities then the state governments push them forward. The state governments play their major role from the following points. The term 'Panchayat Raj' is comparatively new and practiced throughout the country's administration. 'Raj' virtually suggests that governance or government. Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayat rule, a sub organized type of Government where every village is accountable for its own affairs, because the foundation of India's structure is villages.

Today in the modern age there are different states having different types of Panchayat System. Even after the 73rd Powers of Sarpanch amendment made to the constitution, one cannot find the single type of Panchayat in all the states. Kerala Panchayat is different from Kannur; West Bengal Panchayat is different from Bihar Panchayat. But before the existence of the present Panchayat System one could see the system in princely administrative period and it was called as 'Panchara Adalitha' (Administration by five). During this period it is not difficult to find out the Administrators, they are none other than elders of that village who were called as Patela, Gowda, Shanubhoga, Kulakarni etc., but the thing is they were not elected by conducting the elections and their administrative powers came by inheritance and only some upper caste people were

ruling as administrators of that system. These people were loyal to the dynasty and crown and they were collecting the taxes from villagers.

In the present times, integrated rural development has to be achieved in India. The word 'Integrated Rural Development' is however defined differently by people, depending upon the particular objective in view. In the Indian context, integrated rural development can be perceived as 'integrated development of the areas and inclusive development of the disadvantaged sections of the rural society through optimum utilization of the resources – physical, biological and human; and bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes by delivering a package of services to encompass not only the economic field but also the establishment of the required social infrastructure and services in the areas of food, nutrition, health, sanitation, housing, drinking water, literacy, vocational education, selfemployment opportunities, marketing of goods and services and so on. Integrated rural development implies functional, spatial and temporal integration of all these parameters. Thus, the goal of integrated rural development has to be brought about in the state of Kannur by involving multi-disciplinary approaches at the grassroots level. The panchayat raj institutions should be well organized, equipped and motivated to play an active role in the process of integrated rural development which also includes the economic development in the new millennium.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the economic development programmes of PRIs in Kannur district.
- To analyze the financial resource mobilization efforts of PRIs in Kannur
- To examine the effectiveness of implementation of the development Programmes of PRIs in Kannur district.
- To explore new initiatives of panchayat raj institutions for the economic development of Kannur District..

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It was not practically possible for the researcher to enjoy the benefit of accessibility of data to all the PRIs of Kannur state. It was also not possible to study the perception of

all the stakeholders of Panchayat Raj and rural development mainly due to large numbers, lack of time and other constraints. The usual limitations of the survey method such as time, human inadequacies, resource constraints, recollection and communication were experienced by the researcher. Though much care was taken to collect the primary data, the memory bias on the part of the respondents cannot be completely ruled out.

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